

# MEDICAL DISSERTATION,

READ BEFORE THE

MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY.

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ARTICLE VII.

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A DISSERTATION

ON THE

UNCERTAINTY OF THE HEALING ART.

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By GEORGE CHEYNE SHATTUCK, M. D.

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Read before the Massachusetts Medical Society, at their Annual Meeting, June 4, 1838.

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The Massachusetts Medical Society was organized, that individual feebleness might be sustained by associated strength ; that the retreat of self-love and private interest might be occupied by a laudable *esprit du corps* ; that Ishmael might feel the touch of a brother's love ; that physicians, by the interchange of experience, might more successfully oppose the inroads of death.

The Fellows of this Society meet like neighbours, somewhat removed. Neighbours, a little removed, on coming together, usually fall into discourse on some topic within the compass of their common trials. The trials of the physician are numerous.

On the commencement of his career the lowering indignation on him of his neighbourhood as casting the

shadow of the Doctor without his healing power, is a bitter trial. This he patiently bears, because he knows full well that time is a sure remedy.

"The horrors of nothing to do," which resemble the death-bed pangs of the Pagan, "the horror of sinking into nought," summon into exercise his firmest principles. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Like a good soldier, if he stand at his post through these withering shocks, *active* trials follow *passive*. The siege raised, and famine survived, the extension of practice extends his trials. He now braves the midnight tempest, and the pestilence, which wasteth at noon-day. But all these trials to which the physician is subjected, do not equal that which proceeds from the *uncertainty of the healing art*.

The charitable attention, and forbearance, and forgiveness of the Fellows of the Massachusetts Medical Society, are therefore now solicited, while a feeble attempt is made briefly to discuss this grave subject.

Why is the healing art uncertain? Its administrators are less tinctured with credulity than other men, they more confide for their creed in the direct revelation to their own senses. The eye may deceive, the ear may deceive, the senses of smell and taste may deceive, but none doubt the evidence of touch.

Even the doubting disciple yielded up all scruple on touching the prints of the nails in his blessed Master's person!

*Touch* does not approach *vitality*. Life is uncertain. In its journey onward by the human family, the Faculty are posted as centinels to sustain, by all the



invigorating agents within reach, the drooping ones, who are threatened with faintness by the way.

Still according to a bill of mortality formed by Simpson for the City of London, more than half who are born, die within the first three years. Less than one in eighteen arrives at the common age of man, i. e. threescore and ten. Dr. Halley's table on the bills of mortality at Breslau, presents a different result. Different bills of mortality at different places present results still varied. All agree in the great proportional mortality during infancy.

Is this disastrous result chargeable to the faculty? God forbid! The astronomer reads, in the starry heavens, duration. The physician reads in the microcosm, man, perishableness. Were we to leave, in the solution of this great question, the *fiat* of the Creator, and to speculate on secondary physical causes, it might be added, that old age is engraven on all ages in the decay from a minute to a century—from the first gasp to the last gasp of life; i. e. the mortal machine may exhibit the incapacity longer to endure the action of vitality. The perfect child is a rare occurrence, as well as that of the perfect man. The imperfection may not be stamped on the external form, and still exist in the internal organs. The *lusus naturæ* is not taken into the account. That is preserved in the cabinet of the curious only, as the marvel that erring nature is sometimes sportive in her productions. The principle of vitality is variously imparted to the different members of the human family. The well organized, the

strong, and those carefully provided for, alone abide the season of trial. But the wasting epidemic often carries off the beautiful, the apparently robust, and those kindly cared for.

It sometimes occurs that the very atmosphere of a district may contain poisonous or pestilential vapours, which destroy all who breathe them. This again refers to the great Moral First Cause, whose overruling providence, experience teaches, sustains us in all our out-goings and in-comings. But to return to the secondary physical causes of the great relative mortality among children, *original sin* stands revealed in all its hideous deformity. The "*sour grapes*," which the fathers have eaten, ferment in the children's blood. "The wages of sin is death." All indiscretions in parents, which diminish their power enfeeble their offspring, and accelerate their march to an early grave. Accidents and casualties to heedless and neglected childhood swell the catalogue of secondary causes. The uncertainty of human life to all ages, has the concurrent testimony of common experience and holy writ, which, as history and observation, present us with the monuments of human destiny in the arrangement of the grave, "without any order."

If human life be uncertain, no wonder that the healing art, which is to prolong that life, should also be uncertain.

The strength of the human constitution is not the subject of calculation. The various agents, which are destined unequally to act on that constitution are equally without calculation.

The truth therefore can never be ascertained, but may be neared by approximation. The general uncertainty of human life, the particular uncertainty of the individual constitution, and the uncertain casualties which may way-lay that life in its course, all admitted, does it follow, that the general means of preserving life are uncertain? Are shelter, and food, and raiment of equivocal utility? To all the arts of life, which minister to human comfort, experience and common sense have assigned their just value, and the common experience of mankind is neither to be gainsaid, nor resisted.

The natural history of a healthy man from birth to death is as susceptible of register as the tonnage of a ship. Nature in course according to the philosophy of Lord Bacon is readily to be traced, while her wanderings, which constitute exceptions to her general laws, involve her interpreters in a labyrinth. Health, the accompaniment of nature in her uninterrupted free course, is seen and felt, and known by all. Disease, the opposite to health, is the accompaniment of nature in her wanderings, and perplexes her interpreters in all their efforts at comprehension as well as description.

Let a master spirit on Hygiene proclaim that man is a breathing animal, and that a pure, genially attempered, and changeable atmosphere is essential to the maintenance of life and health, and all the world will understand him; and all violators of this simple law of nature, whether a judge on the bench, a mechanic in his workshop, or a traveller in his dormitory, will pay the penalty of transgression by the pangs of disease.



Introduce the physician to cure the disease ; anxiety is on his brow, perplexity in his thoughts, indecision in his course. After careful examination and due deliberation, he acts, because, whether he be christian or pagan, he well knows continuing to doubt, will be to lose both patient and reputation.

The alternation between feeding and fasting, between shelter and exposure, between labour and repose, and the change of raiment with the change of weather and season, are equally comprehensible as important, and even essential in the maintenance of life and health. Habitual departure from the maxims of common experience, in the wholesome changes with changing condition, circumstances, and seasons, in conformity to the simple laws of nature, entails disease on the transgressor. Disease again presents nature in her wanderings, and she is difficultly followed. The origin and seat of disease are often investigated with the extremest difficulty. The selection, and adaptation of the force of the remedy to the severity of the disease involve nicety in the skill and judgment beyond the reach of human power.

The uncertainty of the healing art has almost a withering influence on the practitioner, when he beholds friends and kindred, neighbours and strangers, glancing on him imploring looks, mixed with confidence, for relief, to which he feels his art is inadequate. Is medicine then to be abandoned to empiricks, because it is uncertain and difficult ? The merchant and underwriter, because the navigation is difficult and

uncertain, do not commit the ship to the untaught and inexperienced pilot. The more perilous the voyage, the higher skill and experience and the more science, are concentrated in the commander. Medicine, from its difficulty and uncertainty, demands deeper preparation.

Are not the records of the Faculty so many charts by which the junior practitioner may safely steer his course?

The entire catalogue of human suffering has been made out, and the name of the remedy is appended to the name of every disease. What else is required than reference to the name of the disease to find its remedy? In the mechanic arts the knowledge of the name of a tool does not necessarily imply the skill to use it.

Physicians have done themselves a wrong, and their noble art a wrong, by reducing to system what defies all system. They sometimes contradict themselves, and oftener one another in their nosologies.

The *Nosologica Methodica* of Sauvages comprises ten classes, twenty orders, three hundred and fifteen genera, and two thousand five hundred species; while Cullen has four classes, twenty orders, one hundred and fifty-one genera, and upwards of one thousand species. Good has cast his comprehensive mind on this difficult subject, and his nosology presents seven classes, twenty-one orders, one hundred and thirty genera, and four hundred and eighty species. Our distinguished countryman, Rush, has discovered disease to be a unit, and he proceeds fractionwise in his systematizing labours.

As well may poetry be written from the perusal of Aristotle's Art of Poetry, as disease be cured from the perusal of a nosology, or even the book of a system-maker. The energizing spirit of the invisible Creator must be seen and felt from the observation of all surrounding nature, and experience acquired in the use of the language to express every change and passing sensation, to make a poet. The heart to feel a brother's sorrows, and experience acquired in the means of allaying the pangs of mortality, are essential to make a physician. The former is the gift of God. The latter is a toilsome march, commencing with a pilgrimage to the tomb of mortality, and followed by perils to comfort, character and even life, ere yet "the harp of thousand strings" has revealed in its fabric the wisdom and special design of its maker.

"*Hoc opus, hic labor est*"—Anatomy is the alphabet of the *healing art*. How difficult to learn the alphabet of our profession, notwithstanding the labors of Harvey and Haller, of Hunter and Bichat, of Morgagni, and Mascagni, and Scarpa and Magendie, and their numerous associates and worthy successors on this as well as the other side of the Atlantick. The laws of the land are cruelly against us. Might not a wise legislator turn the spirit of moral reform which hovers over the age into the channel of publick good, by securing the enactment of a law authorising the commitment of the vagrant and harlot, on yielding up life, to the extension of the light of medical knowledge? Fear might come over them and stay their steps; or if



carried along by their depraved natures in the current of abomination, their fate might open the dark recesses of truth to the healing of the sick. The first step towards a medical education being attended with such difficulty and hazard, is one of the prominent sources of the uncertainty of the healing art. The more is known of nature in course, the more readily is nature traced in her wanderings. The more is known of man in his structure, and the economy of his healthy existence, the more readily are traced the aberrations from that healthy economy in the form of disease, and the better is understood the history and termination of disease in the morbid structure it produces.

The functions of the healthy animal economy must be understood, that functional disease be understood. The structure of the healthy man must be understood, that structural disease be understood.

The uncertainty of the healing art is increased by the difficulty of access to the proper sources of knowledge. Personal experience is of slow acquisition. It is true that books on medicine are abundant; but they oftener abound in theory founded on hypothesis, than in theory founded on fact; they contain more arguments to demolish preceding or contemporary theories, than true history of human suffering.

Most of the medical authors of celebrity have received an answer to the prayer of the pious man in holy writ, would "that mine adversary had written a book." No medical book is worthy of a perusal, which is not a transcript from the book of nature.

The treasures of medical experience to be found in medical libraries need sifting, that the true may be separated from the false, the certain from the doubtful, the doubtful from the palpably untrue. The knowledge thus attained, should be arranged according to the leading divisions of anatomists and physiologists. All that is known and which has been published on the diseases of the heart, and arteries, and veins, and absorbent vessels, which constitute the system of circulation, accompanied by engravings to represent to the eye the appearance of the morbid structure, would constitute a valuable addition to the library of every practitioner in the Commonwealth.

In the engraving part, lithography steps in and volunteers her services at a very cheap rate.

The diseases of the brain and nervous system, the diseases of the organs of respiration, the diseases of the organs of digestion, the diseases of the glands and organs of secretion, the diseases of the organs of reproduction, the diseases of the bones and muscles, or organs of locomotion, and the diseases of the skin, constitute other leading divisions for the distribution of the fruits of medical experience, from the time the healing art was a separate calling, to the present moment. Were it practicable to call order out of chaos and present all the medical knowledge which has been given to the public in a neat, condensed, well arranged edition of medical classics, embellished by engravings true to nature, much time and expense might be saved to the practitioner, and the economy of human exis-

tence essentially promoted. "There is nothing new under the sun, what has been, is, and shall be again."

This is the sound of true orthodoxy to all ears not heathenish. The power to reason on the future is derived from the history of the past.

A good medical history of this Commonwealth would be an important acquisition to all the Fellows of the Massachusetts Medical Society. A register of all the births and deaths is needful for a basis on which to found the calculations for insurance on life.

The influence of cultivation of the soil, in draining the sources of putrid exhalation, and in clarifying the atmosphere is seen in the disappearance of intermittents and bilious remittents. The extension of the arts of life to the promotion of human comfort has contributed also to the increased health of the inhabitants of this Commonwealth.

While a better replenished wardrobe, and a more comfortable dwelling are promoters of health, increased luxury, diminished industry, and the undue use of intoxicating liquors are impoverishing the fortunes, ruining the characters, and destroying the lives of the immoral devotees to idleness and appetite. The visions of the future will become revealed in the history of the past. "The prudent man forseeth the evil" and avoideth it. The uncertainty of the healing art almost disappears on its approach to a sound constitution; because it contains within itself the power simultaneously to endure the action of remedies, and to resist the progress of disease.



A sound body natural, as well as a sound body politic, speedily recovers, by skill in the use of means, from the greatest disorder.

Another mode of obviating the uncertainty of the healing art is the adoption of means to strengthen the human constitution. Let the Goddess of Health be invoked to visit the congregated artists, who clothe the human family. Let every one give ear from the hatter down to the shoemaker, and there would be constructed a coat of mail to protect naked mortals against the warring elements, which surround them. All personal constraint would cease, and the slaves of fashion set free, would recover their full power of action, and "walk over dry shod." This would release from a thralldom like the spell of witchcraft.

Let the celestial visitant approach those who feed the human family. Meat in due season would be distributed to every member. The diseases of repletion and the diseases of inanition would stand rebuked in her presence.

"Fruit forbidden," no beguiling serpent in the form of grandam, could present as fair to the eye of hungry curiosity or starving mendicity.

Suppose the invocation extend her visit to those who build houses, and she pour by her whisperings into their ears the sublime truth that man is a breather, and that air is the material of breath, and that the old woman died for want of breath, and that the air, the feeding element of the breath of life, must have free circulation around him, sleeping or waking, or he sickens and

dies. The Architect would come to the conclusion, that the edifice is not for the exclusion of the atmosphere, but for its temperate enjoyment under a regulated but free circulation. This said daughter of Esculapius, called Hygeia, might also be invoked to pour her notes into the ears of the sluggard, and the value of exercise in promoting health and long life would be understood.

If the Massachusetts Medical Society would excite an experienced mind to instruct the people of this Commonwealth, in adapting their diet, exercise, clothing, and habitation to their situation and variable climate, there might be recovered a hardy constitution, which was a birthright from hardy ancestors. This great boon secured would obviate much of the difficulty and uncertainty of the healing art. In a simpler state of society disease would become more simple.

The present age is the era of improvement. The clergy are sending the glad tidings of the gospel to farther India—the politician is teaching nations in bondage the art of freedom—the jurist is holding up, as in a mirror, the science of law, where man may read his rights as well as his duties; the farmer is reducing animal and vegetable production to the precision of a science; the artist, and manufacturer, and merchant are tasking the raging elements to toil for the extension of human comfort. Let not the Physician remain behind his neighbour in his efforts to prolong and render more comfortable human existence.

The founders and supporters of medical schools are

entitled to everlasting remembrance for their labors in calling the attention of the Faculty from speculation to nature, from the hypotheses of antiquity to the study of the structure and functions of the living man. They have constructed for medicine a beautiful temple; but its avenues and foundation are buried in a rubbish, which requires much labour in the removal. Let the youthful aspirant be sufficiently encouraged, and these avenues will become cleared. The State has granted to the Massachusetts Medical Society a fund, which might be distributed in rewards to successful adventurers, to whom should be assigned the labor of solution of the difficult and hitherto uncertain problems in the healing art. In what the funds of the society might fall short, private-individual, voluntary contribution might readily supply; for medicine to very many, if not to most of its fellows, has been a truly liberal profession in its rewards as well as its labors. In the above remarks is disclaimed all intention to withhold from the benefactors to the profession, who have elevated its standard, their merited acknowledgment.

There are no regular bills of mortality extending through the Commonwealth for a series of years, from which a comparison might be instituted to measure the extent of the improvement of the profession within the last twenty or fifty years. In the city of Boston, where its Board of Health keeps an accurate register, a result truly flattering to the sons of the healing art is obtained.



Annexed is a transcript from the records of the Board of Health, which presents an accurate obituary in the metropolis of our Commonwealth from 1813 to 1827 inclusively. In 1813 a population of about thirty-five thousand furnishes 786 deaths. In 1827, a population of 60,000, has but 1022 deaths. The whole is so interesting a document, that it is here presented entire.\*

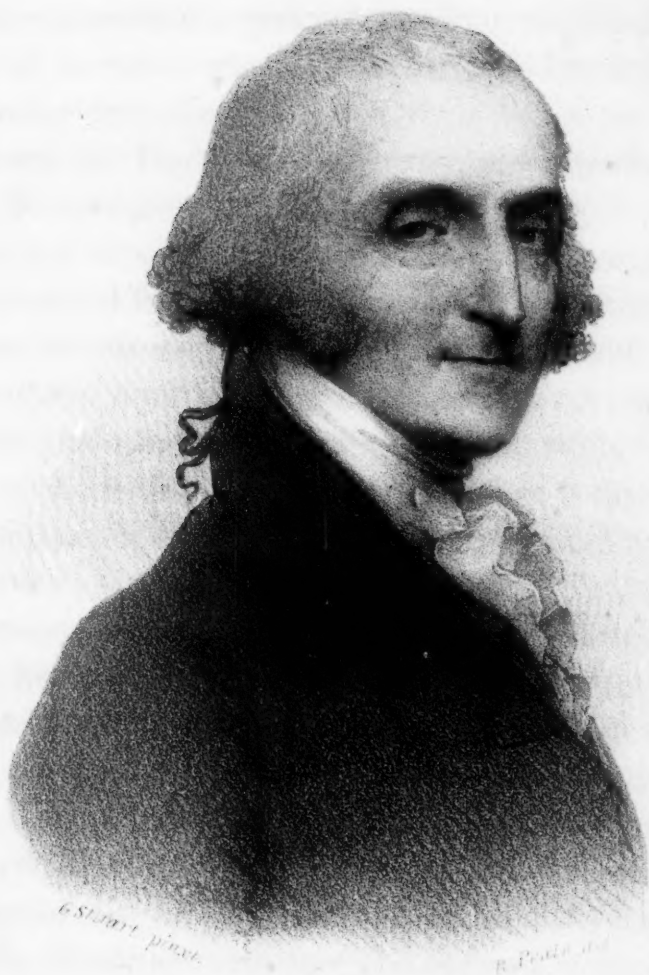
The Massachusetts Medical Society, and the constituted authorities of Boston, have been, under Providence, associated instruments of this alleviation of the lot of mortality. This Society has frowned on the presumptuous empiric, and encouraged unpretending skill to go forward in its labours. The Mayor of the city and his judicious associates have increased the comforts and improved the morals of the city poor, and at the same time diminished the tax for their support. This has been accomplished by their removal from their former close confinement to a farm, where a more wholesome diet and air, and increased occupation have supplied the elements of renovated health. The materials of pestilence they have also removed by the increased cleanliness of the streets, and more perfect drains from the cellars of the dwellings. Its quarantine has also been an important safeguard.

The regularly diminishing ratio of deaths with the regularly increasing ratio of the population, fairly deduced from the annual bills of mortality and the estimated census of the people, presents every encouragement to proceed in the march of improvement.

\* See Table.

The time is fast approaching, when an approving recognisance for having discharged our duty as a connecting link in the chain of being, will constitute our only imperishable reward.

Since the last anniversary of this Society, death has invaded the ranks of our fraternity. The poor man's friend, Dr. Horace Bean, has departed at the age of fifty-four. The courteous gentleman and skilful physician, Dr. Oliver Prescott, has vacated his seat at our board, at the age of sixty-two. His vacant chair is the mournful remembrancer of a name, with which is associated honour in the history of the civil, military, and humane institutions of the Commonwealth. Middlesex, Worcester, Suffolk and Essex are the four counties, where his healing power was kindly exercised, and is now gratefully remembered, by those who had been his patients. On the sixteenth of November last, Dr. Samuel Danforth, some thirty years ago President of the Massachusetts Medical Society, "shuffled off this mortal coil" at the age of eighty-eight. It is a source of rejoicing that he is released from these bonds, because he had survived the power both of usefulness and enjoyment. Neither christian nor philosopher could desire his name or character associated with an empty mansion, which is but a lure to the pity of insolence or the scoffings of folly. Gathered, in a good old age, to the tomb of his fathers, his character, as a kind, upright, and skilful physician, survives to enlighten the Faculty, his associates and successors, in the same laborious but liberal pursuit.



SAM<sup>l</sup> DANFORTH M.D.

Penderon's Lithography





Born in the grove of the muses,\* inhaling with his early breath, the lessons of wisdom from a father, whom the age accounted a great philosopher, the strongly developed nervous temperament of Dr. Danforth was excited to deep thought and study. While an undergraduate in Harvard University, the mathematics were his favourite branch.

Among his contemporaries at college and neighbours he was noted for that same severe love of truth and honour, which distinguished him as a man and a physician through his long and laborious life. At eighteen he was graduated. He commenced the study of medicine with Dr. Rand at Charlestown, at a time when high repute for skill in physick was requited by ninepence the visit.

Weston, in the county of Middlesex, was the theatre of his first trial in the exercise of the healing art.

From Weston he removed to Newport, Rhode Island. From Newport he came to Boston. His sojourn at Weston was but a few weeks, or months, and that at Newport but a few years. Boston became the theatre of his labours as well as of his fame and fortune. Tradition hath assigned fourteen years of unremitting toil as the price of his success in competing for a share of the medical practice in Boston. During this period he studied the science of medicine with all the ardour of a youthful lover. The philosophy of the age was much devoted to experiments in alchymy, that

\* Cambridge.

the useful and precious might be detected and extracted from all substance.

Danforth was believed by his friends secretly to have participated in these labours. At any rate, when Alchymy, by her unremitting labour, gave birth to the beautiful science of Chemistry, like the benighted expectant of the approaching day-spring, Dr. Danforth received the work of Lavoisier with all the enthusiasm of a discoverer. The study of nature from the experiments of Alchymy and their transmutation into the splendid science of Chemistry is believed to have produced an influence in forming his theory of medicine.

He studied man as but an appendage of creation, and surveyed him as influenced by and influencing surrounding matter. Human life in its beginning, progress and termination, and succession, in its association with a physical organization, was the object of his continued and profound study. He was wont to kindle into impassioned eloquence in speaking of the influence of the atmosphere in originating and maintaining respiration. Sensibility was a darling topick of discourse.

Touch he regarded as the universal sense. "The delicate organization of the eye vibrated to the touch of the rays of light, the ear to the rays of sound, the tongue and the nostril to the contact of the grosser particles imparting taste and smell, while a no less important modification of the sense of touch enveloped the whole man in the nervous papillae spread on the skin and concentrated in the extremities of the fingers. The



lax and tense fibre of Boerhaave and the doctrine propagated by Brown, of stimulus on excitability in producing excitement," were incorporated with his theory of medicine. He extended these doctrines by the hypothesis that the corpuscles of the fibres were surrounded by their own calorick or electrical atmosphere, which were extended or contracted by the addition or subtraction of calorick.

He illustrated his theory by the report of a case of poison from the bite of a rattlesnake, and by another case of palsy cured by electricity. The former was a British sailor, who, in playing with the reptile in his possession, the observation of which had amused his hours of relaxation from professional duty, had been bitten on his finger during the Doctor's absence. The part above had been corded to prevent the communication of the poison : the hand and arm to the shoulder notwithstanding, were exceedingly swollen on the Doctor's return. Oil of vitriol as a caustic, was applied to destroy the part bitten, stupes of bitter herbs were applied to the swollen limb, and "alexipharmicks" used internally. The presumptuous sailor recovered. Dr. Danforth laid down the doctrine that there were two kinds of motion, one progressive, the other vibratory. The former applied to the heavenly bodies, the latter to the fibres of the living man. The poison of the rattlesnake on the bitten finger of the sailor, checked the action or vibratory motion of the fibre and changed the electrical or *calorific* atmosphere of its corpuscles, which check of action or vibratory motion threatened to invade the whole man.

The calorick from the stupes was communicated to the corpuscles of the fibres to the recovery of their vibratory motion, while the caustic destroyed the part poisoned, and tonics and cordials in the stomach as alexipharmics sustained the system in its effort to cast off the dead part. His paralytic patient was a Rev. clergyman.

Dr. Danforth assumed that palsy was a check of the vibratory motion of the fibre from the diminished electrical atmospheres of its corpuscles, and that the repeated communication of the electricity restored to the fibres the electrical atmospheres of their corpuscles to the recovery of the patient. During this shock the learned patient lost all consciousness and on recovery was compelled to learn anew even the alphabet. While Dr. Danforth was careful to note the modified action of surrounding matter by contact on an ever varying sensibility, he gave profound attention to the sympathies of the stomach. When summoned to the sick bed he investigated the case with extraordinary acuteness.

Was the stomach the seat of the disease. Ipecacuanha was the agent to rouse its healthy action. Was the alimentary canal below the stomach, or the glands which empty into it, the seat of disturbance, then calomel was his remedy to cure the disease. Bark was his tonic, accompanied by generous food and exercise, and friction and cold bathing. The increased or diminished action on the surface of the body he effected by the addition or subtraction, of caloric. Air, water, elec-

tricity, and cantharides, variously modified to his purpose were his agents. If disease had assailed the nervous system, the abstraction of light, of sound and of conversation, and abstinence, and opium to procure sleep, were his weapons. He proscribed the lancet. Depletion by cathartics, and emetics, and sudorifics, and vesication, and increased secretion and excretion and abstinence he altogether preferred to the sanguinary practice of blood-letting. He illustrated his preference by the figurative expression, "it were better to moderate the fire under the overboiling skillet, than to dip out the overflowing liquor." Beyond the circle of his own family-practice, the cases oftenest presented to his attention were either among malignant epidemic diseases, which alarmed the caution, or chronic diseases which had baffled the skill of the attendant physician. By nature and education an aristocrat, by unceasing toil and undeviating integrity elevated to the front rank of his profession, his clear and unequivocal prescription, founded on the application of his own theory, was received as law. His patients worshipped him as the Magnus Apollo; they feared departure from his instructions, almost as they feared the judgment to come. His noble form raised to the stature of six feet, his erect attitude and majestic gait, his high forehead and moveable occipito-frontalis, which excited to contraction, accompanied a perceptible motion of his ear and arched eyebrow, his penetrant, full, blue eye, aquiline nose and sharp chin, and manly intonation, and his Casisus-like figure, all conspired to add emphasis to his words, as



the responses of an oracle. Shakespeare has not put into the mouth of Hamlet the description of a more perfect man, than Stuart has spread on canvass in the person of Dr. Danforth as seen in his portrait. His countenance seems beaming with all the dignified complacency with which it was clothed on beholding his patient rise from a sick bed. A more stubborn spirit of independence was never seen than was exhibited in the person and life of Danforth. When the Revolutionary war was in embryo, that martyr to his country's liberties, Dr. Joseph Warren, and Dr. Samuel Danforth were associated as physicians to the Boston Poor-house. The associates separated. Their association had been effected by a compromise between the aristocracy and democracy of the country. The loyalists agreed to admit a patriot to the emoluments of office, on conditions he be accompanied by one of their own order. While the active courage of the one led to a glorious death, the passive courage of the other was tried by the threat of tar and feathers and various contumely. Danforth, during many months, went armed with pocket pistols, prepared to repel assault or revenge insult. None who have not hearts of steel can see unmoved the trampling tyranny of the enraged multitude. It must however be confessed, that Dr. Danforth was protected by the spirit of that troop of Amazons, in those days vulgarly called the mob of "North-end" women who delivered of its coffee the warehouse of Mr. Thomas Boylston, and carted their booty to Fort-Hill for distribution. These fair veterans were

alike determined on possessing their Doctor, and their social cups of coffee, tea at this time being out of the question. This inflexible temper of personal independence came to Dr. Danforth very honestly. His ancestor, who came first to this country, deserted a fine estate, and fled to the wilderness to enjoy his liberty, as the tyranny of a tax for an order of knighthood without his consent, had been imposed by Charles I. The apparent discrepancy between the course pursued by the high-minded ancestor and his proud descendants becomes reconciled from the fact, that the latter had eaten the bread of their king.

The Hon. Samuel Danforth, father to the Doctor, was Judge of Probate for the County of Middlesex, when the revolutionary war commenced. During this stormy period, Dr. Danforth committed to the flames all his notes of cases, and medical writings, which otherwise might have been embodied into a system of medicine, as splendid as that of any of his contemporaries. Ever afterwards he spurned at the drudgery of recalling what had been voluntarily sacrificed, although at the time, expatriation seemed almost unavoidable. It was a familiar expression with Dr. Danforth, when an individual had insulted or injured him, that he would 'twig' him; he generally redeemed his promise.

The little pitiful practice of cheapening skill, was exercised towards him by the disbursing officer, who settled his account for attention to the town's paupers. In those days king stood for commonwealth. The

sage auditor decided that the charge must be, not for skill, but for medicine, by measure, or weight. The next annual account, Dr. Danforth drew according to the approved rule of the apothecary's weight and liquid measure. The open cauldron had received the sarsaparilla and lignumvitæ-dust, of course the account was properly vouched. The consequence was, the triumphant physician groaned under the weight of the precious metals on his return from the royal treasury, after settling his next account on the new principle. To a yielding adversary, Dr. Danforth was magnanimous and forgiving. A carman had unluckily demolished the ornamental fence to the front yard of his dwelling house, reparation for the injury was promptly demanded, full acknowledgment of the wrong and unqualified promise of indemnity on the part of the offender was followed by forgiveness of the trespass, and the high-minded landlord repaired the damage at his own cost. In his domestic establishment, Dr. Danforth exhibited the simplicity of a philosopher, and the urbanity of a gentleman. Avarice formed no part of his character, still he could keep money. Some twenty years ago, when a rage for speculation had created a difference of two or three per cent. between Boston and country bank-notes, Dr. Danforth had accumulated a few thousands in depreciated bills. A financial friend advised to a deposit with a broker the foreign bills, and drawing out in due time the specie. Dr. Danforth learned from the broker that a deposit of the foreign money ten days, should entitle to a payment in specie.



Ere counting his money, he inquired, with some emphasis, if such terms of exchange could be afforded ; the interrogatory, receiving a reply in the affirmative, was followed by the response of the sagacious physician, that he also could afford to keep his money, which accordingly was returned to his pocket-book. Three days afterwards, this man of change closed his doors.

Fame was Dr. Danforth's ruling passion. The cure of the sick, enlisted all the strong sensibilities of his nature. His demand of remuneration for professional service was moderate, to the poor was cheerfully remitted. The late Chief Justice Dana of Cambridge, has often confessed the adoption of Danforth as his family physician, to have diminished his annual tax for medical attendance. Dr. Danforth neglected the rich hypochondriac, while the sick servant received his devoted attendance. His errors were the misfortunes of genius. To his friends his smile seemed like the sunbeams from the breaking cloud. To his adversaries and rivals his frown was like a tempest with thunder. For more than sixty years this man of power was devoted to the wants of the sick families, confiding to him their hope of relief ; or night or day, or rain or shine, he faithfully repaired to their aid. Some fifteen years before his death, an injury to the right foot from the kick of a horse had rendered him lame. The feebleness of years invaded first that limb ; but for that accident, it is more than possible, like the free horse, he might have died in the service. To the junior practitioner the name of Danforth will become the

watchword of perseverance, as that of Lawrence to the American sailor has already become that of constancy in the hour of battle. The glorious death of the one, as the disembodying spirit gave utterance to the memorable words, 'don't give up the ship,' has purchased a national spirit of more worth than forty Chesapeakes. The illustrious life of the other, in carrying confidence to the sick chamber, and imparting to the timid and doubtful practitioner the sublime maxim, *Nil desperandum*—presents to his successors encouragement to proceed in the great work of humanity. Twenty years ago the listening ear of pupilage drank in the words of wisdom as they flowed from his lips. Now at his death they seem to work an influence almost electrical in the recall of what the poet of all ages hath pronounced the 'noblest work of God, an honest man.'

It would do you a wrong, myself a wrong, and our enlightened community a wrong, to omit on this occasion the name of our benefactor, who has done more towards raising the standard of the medical profession, in this Commonwealth, than all others out of the profession, since the organization of the Massachusetts Medical Society.

You all anticipate, as you well may, the name of Boylston. Ward Nicholas Boylston, Esq. died at Roxbury, on the 7th of January, 1823, at the age of seventy-eight. His disease was angina pectoris, complicated with general dropsy and hernia. Several months ere his death, he could not support a recumbent posture.

Fully sensible of the slow but certain approach of the king of terrors, he endured his sufferings with the resignation of a Christian, and the calmness of a philosopher. During his last sickness, he often discoursed on the progressive improvement of the healing art, and pronounced a patriarchal blessing on the faculty. He may have derived his respect for medicine as a profession from his great maternal uncle, Dr. Zabdiel Boylston ; or his comprehensive mind may have been so penetrated with the value of medical science, from a familiar acquaintance with John Hunter, and other eminent medical philosophers, that he desired to encourage the best talents of his countrymen, to the cultivation of medical science.

The Boylston Medical Library of Harvard University, the Boylston Anatomical Museum of Harvard University, the Boylston prize medals for successful Dissertations on difficult medical subjects, and the donations to the Boylston Medical Society, constitute a sum total of patronage to the Medical Profession, which the recipients of the bounty will ever remember in silent but operative gratitude.

The ear of our benefactor is deaf to our feeble praise, but he is translated to the abode of the just made perfect, where their works do follow them.

The Massachusetts Medical Society will learn, with much satisfaction, that the last moments of Mr. Boylston were soothed by friendship the most devoted, and kindness the most untiring.

The prominent incidents in the life of a benefactor



are ever recounted by the recipients of his bounty, with the most glowing delight.

Ward Nicholas Boylston, Esq. alias Ward Hallowell, was born in Boston, November 22d, 1749. The family residence of his father was on the site where now stands the new stone gothic church, in which the apostolical Beecher pours forth his eloquence to awaken slumbering christendom to extend its conquests through the habitable globe.\* His father was an officer in the Custom House, when the revolutionary war began. His mother was a Boylston. His education was conducted in the free schools of Boston. By the particular desire of his maternal uncle, Nicholas Boylston, through a royal license, he dropped the name of Hallowell, and received the addition of, to his Christian name Ward, Nicholas Boylston. According to the laws and usage of the time, the Christian name could not be changed. The change of the paternal to the maternal name, took place March 25th, 1770.

\* Benjamin Hallowell, Esq. the father of Mr. Boylston, married Mary Boylston, by whom he had fourteen children, of whom two only now survive; viz. Sir Benjamin Hallowell, vice-admiral of the Red, in the British Navy, and Mrs. Judge Elmsley, both residents in England. Mrs. Hallowell was the daughter of Thomas Boylston, and sister to Nicholas Boylston, and Thomas Boylston, and Mrs. Governor Gill, and three other sisters and another brother. Thomas Boylston, the father of Mrs. Hallowell, was the fourth son of Dr. Thomas Boylston, who came to this country in 1635, and settled in Brookline, on the farm where the late David Hyslop, Esq. resided. Peter Boylston, the third son of Dr. Thomas Boylston, was the father of the mother of the late ex-president John Adams. Dr. Zabdiel Boylston, F. R. S. who first introduced, at the peril of his life, the Small Pox inoculation into America, was the eldest son to Dr. Thomas Boylston above named, of course Dr. Zabdiel Boylston was great uncle to our deceased benefactor, and his mother and the mother of John Adams, the ex-president, were first cousins. Dr. Zabdiel Boylston when



W. N. BOYLSTON ESQ.





In 1773, change of climate having been advised by his physician to renovate infirm health, Mr. Boylston embarked on board the ship *King of Naples*, October the 12th, bound from Boston to Newfoundland; thence he sailed to Italy. From Italy he proceeded to Turkey. Syria, the Archipelago, the Holy Land, Egypt, and the Barbary Coast, became successively the scene of his travels. During this period his searching curiosity stored his mind with extensive knowledge illustrating the historical parts of the bible, and enlarged his sympathies toward the depressed and suffering portion of the human family. He extended his travels through Geneva, Savoy, France and Flanders to England, where he arrived at London on the 15th of July, 1775. During twenty-five years he remained in England engaged in the miscellaneous operations of trade. On the 23d of March, 1800, he embarked on board the *Galen* for Boston, where he arrived, the 15th of May, following.

Among the first acts which marked the benevolence of his character, on his return to his native country, stands recorded his confirmation to Harvard University of a bequest by Nicholas Boylston, Esq\* in

in London befriended Franklin, while yet a journeyman printer in distress. Dr. Franklin, when ambassador to the French Court about half a century afterwards, acknowledged the debt of gratitude to the great nephew, our deceased friend.

\* At the annual commencement of 1772, at Harvard University, the Orator of the day thus notices the bequest of Nicholas Boylston, in an English Oration then delivered :

"To the illustrious names of Harvard, Stoughton, Hancock, Hersey and others, I add, with the highest satisfaction, the name of Boylston, who has lately

1772, of one thousand five hundred pounds, to found a professorship of Rhetorick and Oratory. By the terms of the bequest, it had become a lapsed legacy. At this time it had amounted to \$23,200. The generous heir at law resigned his princely inheritance, conditioned that the original intentions of the testator go into immediate operation, and that John Quincy Adams be elected the professor. It is difficult to decide, which most to admire, his generosity in parting with his treasure, or his discretion in selecting the incumbent to fill an important office.

The power to persuade is a most desirable attribute of a liberal education in a free country. The cultivation of eloquence Mr. Boylston regarded as an important safeguard of freedom. To give effect to the instructions of the professor of Rhetoric and Oratory, the Boylston prizes for successful elocution were established.

In 1802, Mr. Boylston secured by a bond to Harvard University, an annuity of one hundred dollars, to be distributed in premiums for the discussion of prize questions on medical subjects. Five hundred dollars in 1803, were paid to the treasurer of Harvard University, to form a permanent fund, the income of which

manifested his beneficence to this University by an ample donation, to found a professorship of Rhetoric and Oratory.

She to the amplest bounds of fame's domain,  
On honour's notes shall give thy name to fly,  
And unborn ages echo back the strain,  
Harvard forbids that Boylston's name should die."

The Orator of that day has since been Vice-President of the Massachusetts Medical Society.

was appropriated to the purchase of the most useful books.

To the annuity of sixty dollars for distribution in prizes to successful competitors in elocution, Mr. Boylston added in his last will, one thousand dollars ; also, one thousand dollars to the fund for Medical Prize Questions, and another thousand dollars, in addition to the prize fund, in the hands of the Boylston Medical Society for the collection of an anatomical museum ; the latter bequest, as an accumulating fund, ultimately to construct a building for the Anatomical Museum.

It is a source of satisfaction to the Fellows of the Massachusetts Medical Society, that this patron of medicine and of eloquence, has his name identified with the street, the market-place, the insurance office, and the school-house in his birth-place.

To the farmer Mr. Boylston's example is truly instructive. His farm-house, his barn, his fences, his animals, and his grass-lands were a model for imitation to the enlightened and enterprising yeomanry of the Commonwealth, as all visitors to his residence at Princeton can attest.

As a politician his enthusiasm knew no limit. On the inauguration of the present incumbent as President of the United States, he lighted a bonfire on the summit of the Wachusett, the light of which was seen in Boston ; and at the same time baptized with fire this beacon to the mariner as he approaches our harbour, and changed its name to Mount Adams, which latter name is adopted on many of the recent maps. In jus-



tification of the change of an ancient name of a principal mountain, it may be well to mention, that the 2400 acres, as the territorial possession of Mr. Boylston, in Princeton, includes this entire mountain, base as well as summit.

The ex-president, John Adams, and Mr. Boylston, were fast friends. Their friendship was heightened by ties of consanguinity. The mothers to both were Boylstons.

On entering his ninetieth year, Mr. Adams entertained as a guest at his table, Mr. Boylston. It was generally known that Mr. Adams had experienced for a considerable time, such tremor in his hands as to be unable even to feed himself. Towards the conclusion of the feast was offered, as a toast, 'perpetual alliance between the Adamses and Boylstons.'

This sentiment so rallied the Boylston blood in the veins of the venerable ex-president, that he took and drank his glass of wine with a steady hand.

As a polished gentleman none exceeded Mr. Boylston, as both citizen and stranger may bear witness. Those who have tasted the feast at his table can never forget his hospitality.

It may not be unworthy of mention, that he has left a very ample fortune to his family, notwithstanding his benefactions to the public, and private charities, in the form of annuities, to numerous friends whose circumstances had fallen into decay, and his having paid more than sixty thousand dollars in the law.

This imperfect and barren outline of a memoir of

the life of our departed benefactor, the Massachusetts Medical Society will more readily excuse from a general presumption, that the illustrious kinsman of Mr. Boylston, (who is co-executor of his last will, and guardian to his grandsons, and a legatee withal to his estate,) will, at some future season of leisure, employ his eloquent pen in writing his life and character.

The destroying angel has slain another victim. Dr. Ezekiel Dodge Cushing died at Hanover, on the 5th of April, 1828, at the age of thirty-eight, ere his arrival at "the noon of life." Inheriting from a healthy parentage, a robust constitution, his early years gave promise of a long life. He was the son of the late Mr. Nathaniel Cushing, of Pembroke, was graduated at Harvard University, in 1808, commenced the study of medicine with Dr. Nathan Smith, at Hanover, N. H. extended his medical education by attendance on the hospital and lectures at Philadelphia, and afterwards went to London, where he became a dresser in St. Thomas' Hospital under Mr. Birch, and simultaneously attended on the lectures of Abernethy, and Cooper, and Heighton. From London he went to Paris, in the hospitals of which, while the allies occupied that city, he enjoyed the opportunity of witnessing an extensive surgical practice. His education had been practical, and he had acquired to an eminent degree the tact of the profession. He commenced the practice of medicine and surgery in Boston, and but for the surplus of skill beyond the public demand, his success had been brilliant, a great proportion of his cases

and severe cases too, terminated favourably. Some years back, he had occasionally been in an epileptic state. Since his removal from Boston to Hanover, his practice in difficult cases extended even to towns quite distant. His opinions had given great satisfaction to both the attendant physician and patient. His last sickness, which commenced in a paralytic attack on the muscles of one side of the face and organ of speech, while travelling to visit a patient, was an atrophy connected with an entire prostration of the tone of the stomach. His sickness and death has shrouded in gloom his whole neighborhood. To his family the loss is irreparable. The odour of an honest fame is the only inheritance he has left to his wife and children. His wisdom had been for his neighborhood, and not for himself or family. His discretion had been discovered in good offices to the sick and suffering, and not in the ingathering harvest for his family. As Dr. Cushing cast his bread upon the waters, may his wife and children, after many days, under the blessing of the widow's God, and the Father to the fatherless, gather it up.



# TABLE

Shewing the number of deaths in the City of Boston, from the year 1813 to 18

	Under 1 year.		1 to 2.		2 to 5.		5 to 10.		10 to 20.		20 to 30.		30 to 40.		40 to 50.		50 to 60.		60 to 70.		70 to 80.		80 to 90.		90 to 100.	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1813	116	37	52	32	22	19	10	11	14	17	50	40	50	49	59	29	31	31	22	34	19	22	6	9	1	4
1814	103	58	49	27	29	24	19	9	19	16	55	59	45	42	32	24	18	17	12	13	10	27	9	12		1
1815	94	69	46	43	25	29	15	19	23	22	52	58	59	46	42	31	30	21	18	35	12	33	3	25		1
1816	95	91	33	35	30	29	18	11	25	24	65	77	64	50	58	30	27	30	19	30	17	26	5	13		2
1817	76	80	72	63	39	25	23	10	15	29	44	34	46	53	58	62	35	28	24	24	27	16	13	10		3
1818	83	89	49	49	35	22	18	18	26	17	58	52	57	56	60	49	51	38	36	35	25	24	9	11	2	2
1819	77	53	52	39	27	14	17	21	21	28	67	58	58	36	44	28	26	29	18	27	13	20	3	13		
1820	84	73	46	48	30	32	13	14	19	38	66	65	54	45	58	36	43	26	19	24	14	26	9	16		4
1821	103	81	94	94	68	48	31	16	26	27	61	75	58	75	62	46	40	39	26	27	20	28	7	15		3
1822	92	72	55	41	32	22	19	23	22	27	63	66	70	50	69	44	42	34	18	36	17	22	7	15	1	2
1823	96	64	49	45	20	18	20	17	22	29	55	77	58	59	63	56	33	30	20	26	20	22	9	13	3	
1824	105	94	54	65	42	40	23	16	24	31	62	67	77	61	64	46	48	36	21	33	17	25	7	13	1	3
1825	134	100	85	85	57	47	27	19	19	35	65	71	85	70	72	45	37	44	21	30	19	36	11	15	1	7
1826	133	91	56	67	39	36	25	20	21	29	70	67	96	62	71	46	35	38	28	33	20	25	6	15	2	2
1827	94	74	32	40	32	24	17	12	28	21	57	67	64	65	61	46	42	30	28	18	16	21	10	15	1	1
1485	1126	824	773	527	429	295	236	324	390	890	933	941	819	873	618	537	470	330	425	266	373	114	210	12	35	
1126		773		429		236		390		933		819		618		470		425		373		210		35		
2611		1597		956		531		714		1823		1760		1491		1007		755		639		324		47		

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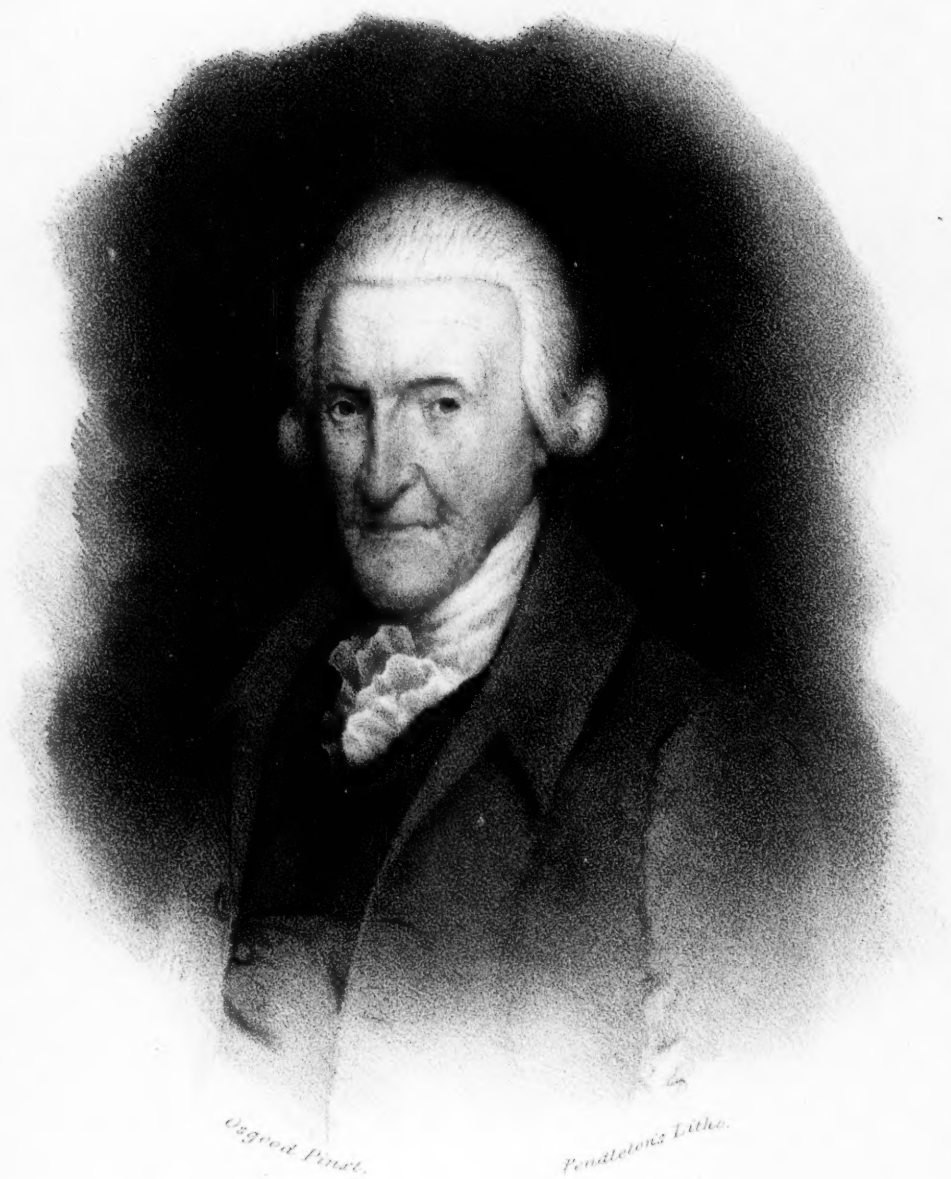
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# TABLE

Shewing the number of deaths in the City of Boston, from the year 1813 to 1827, inclusive.

	Under 1 year.		1 to 2.		2 to 5.		5 to 10.		10 to 20.		20 to 30.		30 to 40.		40 to 50.		50 to 60.		60 to 70.		70 to 80.		80 to 90.		90 to 100.		100 to 110.		Still born.		Ages Un- known.		Total.	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F				
1813	116	37	52	32	22	19	10	11	14	17	50	40	50	49	59	29	31	31	22	34	19	22	6	9	1	4					36			786
1814	103	58	49	27	29	24	19	9	19	16	55	59	45	42	32	24	18	17	12	13	10	27	9	12		1				32			727	
1815	94	69	46	43	25	29	15	19	23	22	52	58	59	46	42	31	30	21	18	35	12	33	3	25		1				21			851	
1816	95	91	33	35	30	29	18	11	25	24	65	77	64	50	58	30	27	30	19	30	17	26	5	13		2				31			904	
1817	76	80	72	63	39	25	23	10	15	29	44	34	46	53	58	62	35	28	24	24	27	16	13	10		3		1		33			910	
1818	83	89	49	49	35	22	18	18	26	17	58	52	57	56	60	49	51	38	36	35	25	24	9	11	2	2					46			971
1819	77	53	52	39	27	14	17	21	21	28	67	58	58	36	44	28	26	29	18	27	13	20	3	13						89	192*		1070	
1820	84	73	46	48	30	32	13	14	19	38	66	65	54	45	58	36	43	26	19	24	14	26	9	16		4				89	50	62	1103	
1821	103	81	94	94	68	48	31	16	26	27	61	75	58	75	62	46	40	39	26	27	20	28	7	15		3				90	82	69	1420	
1822	92	72	55	41	32	22	19	23	22	27	63	66	70	50	69	44	42	34	18	36	17	22	7	15	1	2					115	63	44	1203
1823	96	64	49	45	20	18	20	17	22	29	55	77	58	59	63	56	33	30	20	26	20	22	9	13	3						109	63	28	1124
1824	105	94	54	65	42	40	23	16	24	31	62	67	77	61	64	46	48	36	21	33	17	25	7	13	1	3					89	78	55	1297
1825	134	100	85	85	57	47	27	19	19	35	65	71	85	70	72	45	37	44	21	30	19	36	11	15	1	7					88	59	66	1450
1826	133	91	56	67	39	36	25	20	21	29	70	67	96	62	71	46	35	38	28	33	20	25	6	15	2	2					87	21	13	1254
1827	94	74	32	40	32	24	17	12	28	21	57	67	64	65	61	46	42	30	28	18	16	21	10	15	1	1					83	13	10	1022
1485 1126	1126	824 773	773	527 429	429	295 236	236	324 390	390	890 933	933	941 819	819	873 618	618	537 470	470	330 425	425	266 373	373	114 210	210	12 35	35			1		848	429 *192 367	367	16,092	
2611		1597		956		531		714		1823		1760		1491		1007		755		639		324		47			1		848	988		Total, 16,092		





E.A. HOLYOKE, M.D.L.L.D.

AGED 100 YEARS.



E. A. HOLYOKE,

AGED 45.